

Standard 4000-05

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and expressively with appropriate phrasing and intonation. Fluency is a critical component of reading development that can be developed through instruction. The goal of fluency instruction is not fast reading, but expressive and meaning-filled reading. Automaticity (fast, effortless word recognition) is necessary, but not sufficient, for fluency. Fluency has as much to do with accessing the deeper meaning of the text as it has to do with attending to words on a page. Fluency allows the reader to concentrate on comprehension, but fluent reading does not guarantee comprehension. Fluency instruction should begin in kindergarten as children participate in shared reading with the teacher. Fluent reading can be developed by modeling and having students engage in repeated oral reading of familiar text.

Fluency develops gradually over considerable time and through substantial practice. Students need multiple opportunities to orally and silently read text that is not too difficult. Multiple opportunities allow students to learn to read expressively and discover reading as a pleasurable, meaning-making activity. Reading rate and accuracy are important as diagnostic indicators for assessing students' overall reading performance.

Research shows that beginning readers who develop automaticity with word identification skills are better able to comprehend text. A study conducted with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicates a strong relationship between oral fluency and silent reading comprehension. Students who scored lower on measures of fluency also scored lower on measures of comprehension.

Reading rate has been shown to be related to reading volume. Children with slower reading rates simply read fewer words than faster readers in the same amount of time. High levels of fluency are related to ample opportunities to practice. Students should never lose sight of the importance of understanding what they read; lessons should be comprehension-oriented, even when smooth and fluent oral reading is being emphasized.

The following are possible suggestions and not all-inclusive:

Teacher Delivery

1. Provide students with models of fluent reading during read alouds and guided reading lessons.
2. Provide opportunities for students to repeatedly read (3-4 times) a short passage of 50-200 words aloud with guidance and monitoring for fluency.
3. Provide teacher-directed (guided reading) lessons in which children spend the maximum amount of time engaged in reading connected text on an appropriate level (90% or higher accuracy).
4. Provide multiple opportunities with a variety of texts on students' independent reading level (95% or higher accuracy).
5. Provide opportunities to practice through echo reading, choral reading, readers' theater, shared book experience, and paired reading. (Round robin reading has been shown to be ineffective.)

Standard 4000-05 Fluency (Continued)

Assessments

Formal: Approved state, district, and school assessments.

Informal:

1. Assess word recognition on groups of high-frequency words after learning and practice opportunities have been provided.
2. Listen to individual students read and evaluate whether the reading is word-by-word; more than word-by-word but not in phrases; or in phrases.
3. Listen to individual students read and evaluate accuracy, phrasing, expression, and comprehension.
4. Time a student's reading to determine rate in words per minute.

Differentiation

1. Select short, highly predictable selections that are meant to be read aloud with expression, such as rhyming poetry.
2. Model the initial pages of a text with the students following along in their own texts. Students can then read the remainder of the story with greater fluency and fewer misread words.
3. Instruct tutors to preview new stories with a student, pause to allow the student to self-correct or figure out a difficult word, prompt helpfully and strategically if needed, and offer specific praise for the student's efforts.
4. Provide frequent uninterrupted reading practice with connected text containing high-frequency words.
5. Provide additional opportunities for students to reread familiar text.
6. Provide students with ample opportunity to read more sophisticated or less sophisticated text.
7. Provide students with models of fluent reading.
8. Provide students with the opportunity to read material on their independent level, in pairs, and groups with fluency and expression.

Home Connection

1. Communicate the importance of students and parents reading together daily to improve fluency.
2. Provide appropriate reading material for students to read fluently to parents.
3. Instruct parents in instructional models that include rereading and paired reading.
4. Encourage parents to have their children read at home daily:
 - Kindergarten—read to, with, and by for twenty minutes.
 - First grade—twenty minutes.
 - Second—twenty to thirty minutes.
 - Third-sixth—thirty to sixty minutes.